Government to ensure equitable and rationale distribution of external assistance for this purpose?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF URBAN AFFAIRS AND EMPLOYMENT (DR. U. VENKATESWARLU): (a) to (d) There are no projects under execution in the country with external assistance under the scheme of Environmental improvement of Urban Slums.

Health Insurance Companies

3. SHRI SULTAN SALAHUDDIN OWAISI:

SHRI BHAKTA CHARAN DAS:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are considering to issue some guidelines for health insurance companies;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the extent to which such guidelines would benefit the common man;

(c) the time by which such guidelines are likely to be made effective; and

(d) the steps being taken or proposed to be taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY): (a) to (d) The Finance Minister in his Budget Speech for 1997-98 had announced the proposal to move necessary amendments to enable General Insurance Corporation of India to float Joint Ventures and also to allow entry of selected Indian players in the health insurance sector. Before the Government issues guidelines in this regard to the companies, the relevant Sections of the General Insurance Business (Nationalisation) Act, 1972 would require amendment, Comprehensive regulation will be made and enforced by the Insurance Regulatory Authority for all the service providers, including health insurers in the insurance industry.

[Translation]

Quality of Tooth Paste

4. VAIDYA DAU DAYAL JOSHI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Dental Surgeons have expressed concern over the quality of Indian made tooth paste to safeguard the teeth and gums in their conference held in Chandigarh;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the quality of Indian made tooth paste has been examined; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY): (a) and (b) As per a newspaper report, a Conference of Dental Experts was held in Punjab in which reference was made to misleading advertisements and exaggerated claims of different brands of toothpaste.

(c) and (d) Tests and analysis conducted on 10 samples of frouridated toothpaste of different brands in India has revealed that the manufacturers of these products were complying with the labelled specifications under the Drugs and Cosmetic rules 1945. Such checks are an on-going activity.

[English]

New Kenda Colliery

5. SHRI HARADHAN ROY: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the report of the Inquiry Committee appointed by this Ministry in respect of fire accident in Mines on 25.1.94 at New Kenda Colliery of Eastern Coalfields Ltd., where 55 persons died;

(b) the total amount spent for conducting this enquiry; and

(c) the amount spent so far to extinguish this fire?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR): (a) The Report of the Court of Inquiry reveals that the fire in the Mine originated at the roof of gallery adjacent to the pit No. 2 due to spontaneous heating. The court has pointed out several lapses on the part of management which are as under:

(1) there was no telephone connection connecting the surface with the ends of the haulage Roadways.

(2) No burning mass over fell down initially as none, had seen any flame, though black smoke was seen. It appears that, if water would have been used to quench the fire, it might have succeeded.

(3) this is a case where recourse to prompt reversal could have been taken without any hesitation as the fire was near the intake pit.

(4) all the workers going into the underground workings were not carrying self rescuers.

(5) escape routes were not properly secured and notified to the workers.

(6) short supply of stone dust in the mines.

However, the court of inquiry has concluded that it is a system failure and no individual can be held responsible for all these lapses.

(b) The total amount spent by the DGMS for conducting this enquiry was Rs. 5,44,261.00.

(c) The amount spent by ECL upto date to extinguish this fire is Rs. 6,99,35,987.58.